UWHARRIE DREAMS

VOLUME III

RCC'S FINE ARTS MAGAZINE

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Photo by John Rolland

Volume III

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Illustration by Greg Van Hoose

Words

by Jonathan D. Britt

Hyphenated day dreams.
Concrete thoughts.
Cementing my brain
With lackluster emotions.
Paraphrased proverbs.
Glowing ember-hot
To satisfy my thirst
For words.
Lowercase rules
of contradictions
splash against
the inside of my head.
Clip art memories
kept hidden
In thoughts of
Diluted emptiness.

Blurred Images

by Shannon Wilkerson

"It's coming! Are you brave enough? Can you stand the pressure?" The snake comes closer, rises and threatens to attack. Its red eyes are staring through my soul. It seems to know my fear without my saying a word. "King's Island King Cobra will open this weekend. Come for a ride ...if you dare." The commercial ends, but its words ring in my ears. Come for a ride? No thank you!

Our church youth group was going to King's Island for the first time in three years. Up until recently our youth group had mainly consisted of my cousins, myself and a few of the local kids who had known each other since diapers. This would have been like any other trip except that Jasmine and Starr Smart were going with us. The Smarts had to be the coolest kids who ever existed. From the first day they stood out, from their multiple ear piercings, to their dramatically colored hair dye. They were the closest thing to Madonna that I had ever seen. I found myself doing the most bizarre things to fit in and gain their acceptance.

The morning of our trip seemed to arrive at hyper speed. I was so nervous that I could hardly walk due to my loudly knocking knees. Everyone wanted to ride the Cobra over and over again. That is, everyone but me. I was quite content to keep my feet on solid ground.

Jasmine knew that I admired her, worshipped the ground that she walked on would have been a more accurate statement, and she used this to talk me into trying to ride the Cobra. "If you change your mind, you can just walk across the barrier and jump right off," she advised. That sounded innocent enough for me. I knew right away that I would never actually ride this repulsive demon. I would just act cool by merely appearing in line with Jasmine and Starr. When our turn arrived I would simply jump across the barriers and meet them on the other side. No one would ever know that I did not actually ride this crazy thing. "Sure, I'll go," I heard myself say.

Jasmine, Starr, and I got in the never-ending line and waited our turn. Soon enough it was "do or die time." I walked forward and froze to that spot. There was no barrier to jump across! I was stuck. There were several people seated to a row. The only way to get off this ride was when it finished its coil of death. It was going to kill me! Jasmine knew that I was in a total state of panic. She tried to calm me by saying that things would be okay. It would be over before I knew it. This was very unlikely. It was more likely that I would be the first nine-year-old to die of a heart attack!

I was placed between Starr and Jasmine. The Cobra started its torture with jerks and loud clicks; each one brought me closer to my breaking point. My eyes were closed tight, but it did not help. We had reached the top of the first peak and my heart stopped. Suddenly, we dropped and were whipped around and spun senseless. I am not sure how many times we rose, fell, and twisted about. I just knew that I was being punished for doing something so stupid.

Finally the snake released me and no sooner did I exit the snake's damp, dark tunnel than I threw up all over myself. The only reason I even went on that crazy ride was to win some points with the Smarts and all I proceeded to do was to humiliate myself and attract flies. Alone in the bathroom, I realized that there was no need to alter who I am just to impress the cool new kids.

Illustration by Will Ritter

Illustration by Karen Luther

Old Man

by Jason Thomas

In time am I,
with the classics.
I know a few,
of the good flicks.
I am not young,
but I am not old.
I am not yet,
starting to grow mold.
I have lived,
through peace and war.
And have survived,
many a bore.
I have hunted,
many a thing.
But never before,
a human being.
Let me go,
so I can snooze
And go young one,
to drink your booze.

One Last Phone Call

by Jared Johnson

The prism that was his eyes
Dimmed for the last time
In those words that changed me

As they were uttered
My breath slipped away
With my pulse not far behind

And as my heart slowed to next to nothing
My soul left my body to play the observer
Upon its return the ache was complete
And the moment was over

He had said "Good bye"

Photo by Will White

Photo by Megan Shuford

One Step Closer

by Andrea Cavallier

I am one step closer,

as I start to imagine myself somewhere else.

When I shut my eyes, I can feel the city wind sweep through my hair. I feel the warmth of my scarf as it struggles to stay around my neck.

I can smell the bittersweet aroma of the hot dog stand and the nearby coffee shops.

I hear the rush of the people on the streets; the shouts of taxi drivers, the happy screams of playing children, and the thunderous chatter of those on their cell phones. The noise is deafening but I feel the rush of their incessant spirit and their excitement for life.

With all of my senses, I imagine that I am there, in a city far from here, where I can grow and prosper and experience a new outlook on life.

I am one step closer,

then I open my eyes.

I am back in my small, sweet town which I have grown to love. It is a gentle venue far from the bustling metropolis, yet growing and changing as it should. As I come back to reality, the sounds and the smells are once again familiar and everything I see in town holds a place in my heart and a memory in my mind.

I am one step closer,

to leaving this town and having a life of my own, but may someday return, for this will always be my home.

CODA

by Renee Britt Sink

We sat with our backs to a turret on Fort Casso in Rohrbach, a village on the border between France and Germany. Like J.D. and me, its allegiance had been tried many times; it had once been French, then German, then French again after World War II. Now the empty walls of the fort rang with echoes and the voices of tourists.

Our mother between us, J.D. plucked some grass strands, arranged them in a fashion I had never been able to imitate, and started playing his pseudo instrument. I could make out the faint, grass twang of "The Stars and Stripes Forever," a dog-eared favorite from marching band.

Let me start at the beginning. The rivalry between J.D. and me began with the fight for our mother's lap. As we developed, war became so second nature that, in addition to standard insults and blows, we converted unlikely objects into missiles: dirt clods, garden produce, and chicken eggs. We were prisoners of war.

When I was ten my parents wanted me to emulate the Angel Gabriel so they enrolled me in the elementary band, playing trumpet. In addition to being the only girl archangel, my secondhand trumpet was a source of humiliation three times a week. In contrast to everybody else's instrument, mine was dented and bent, its finish the color of an aged pockmarked pear. From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli, I fought my own internal battles while I used that trumpet.

When J.D. became eligible for band, he inherited my trumpet and I got a brand new one. It was a coveted Bach Stradivarius, professional-grade instrument, gleaming brass and silver. It had a carrying case as splendid as the casket of a general, the interior lined with shimmering royal blue velvet.

While I basked in the glimmer of my new trumpet, J.D. sat a few seats away sweating in humiliation. The new trumpet became the source of all kinds of hostility between us. "You got a new trumpet and I didn't. That's not fair! I have to use this old ugly thing!" he used to say.

"I got here before you, remember. I used it for two years!"

The only thing in our lives as constant and protracted as our enmity for one another was our mother's search for her father. He left when she was three and she spent our entire childhood thumbing through telephone books of cities throughout the U.S.

One day J.D. asked me in band class if we could switch instruments for the session. I said, "No." When we got home that afternoon, he left me alone, which was surprising. Super-persistent, J.D. had learned how to hone determination like a sword: "Why not?" "When can I?" "You're supposed to share!" "It's not fair!" But this time, nothing.

The next band day, Mr. Van Ecksell asked me to play a chromatic scale. I took a deep nervous breath and blew. There was no sound but a fart of air coming out from around the mouthpiece. All the other kids burst out laughing, J.D. the loudest. He looked straight at me and I realized that he had sabotaged my trumpet by turning one of the valves around backwards. I struggled to right it, but not before Mr. Van Ecksell called on someone else.

That afternoon I ambushed J.D. with a series of projectile rotten tomatoes as he cornered the house. Impotent with rage, he stormed into the kitchen to report me. I was hot on his heels, ready with my defense. The sight of our mother brought us up short. She sat hunched over a pile of telephone books, in tears. This was the first time we had seen the hope that normally characterized her searching falter. The two of us allies in that instant, J.D. said, "We'll help you find your daddy."

Decades later, the three of us met in Rhorbach. A sad thing had brought us here. After decades, our mother's quest was over. When she thought to check the death records for her father's name, she found that he had died just two years prior and his next-of-kin was Anna Hicks, from this village.

J.D., stationed in Holland in the U.S. Army, had spent his vacation days exploring the village before my mother and I flew from the States. His

research revealed the cemetery where our grandfather was buried, which he visited in preparation for our journey there together. He also found the telephone number of Anna Hicks and the names of two families who were my grandfather's closest friends. J.D. contacted the families and set up appointments to meet with them. Then he called Anna Hicks, explaining that we were the long lost family of her late husband and that we would be in Rohrbach such and such date. When he asked if she would meet with us, a dial tone was her answer.

When my mother and I arrived, we all drove to Rohrbach. Our first destination was the cemetery. The wrought iron gate squeaked as we walked through it. Instead of flower-filled urns set onto the base of the headstone, loved ones planted flowers directly into the soil! Instead of headstones, many had stone plaques reading, "Dear Father," "Beloved Mother," or "Treasured Friend."

"Go straight here, then right," J.D. directed. "I think this is the grave. There was a plaque here last time, with 'Edouard Hicks' on it but now I don't see it." Then, "It's not here! Look at the bare spot where the plaque used to be! I know what happened. Anna came down here after I called and took it off! She didn't want us to find it!" Later that evening he dialed Anna Hicks' number again but it was no longer in service.

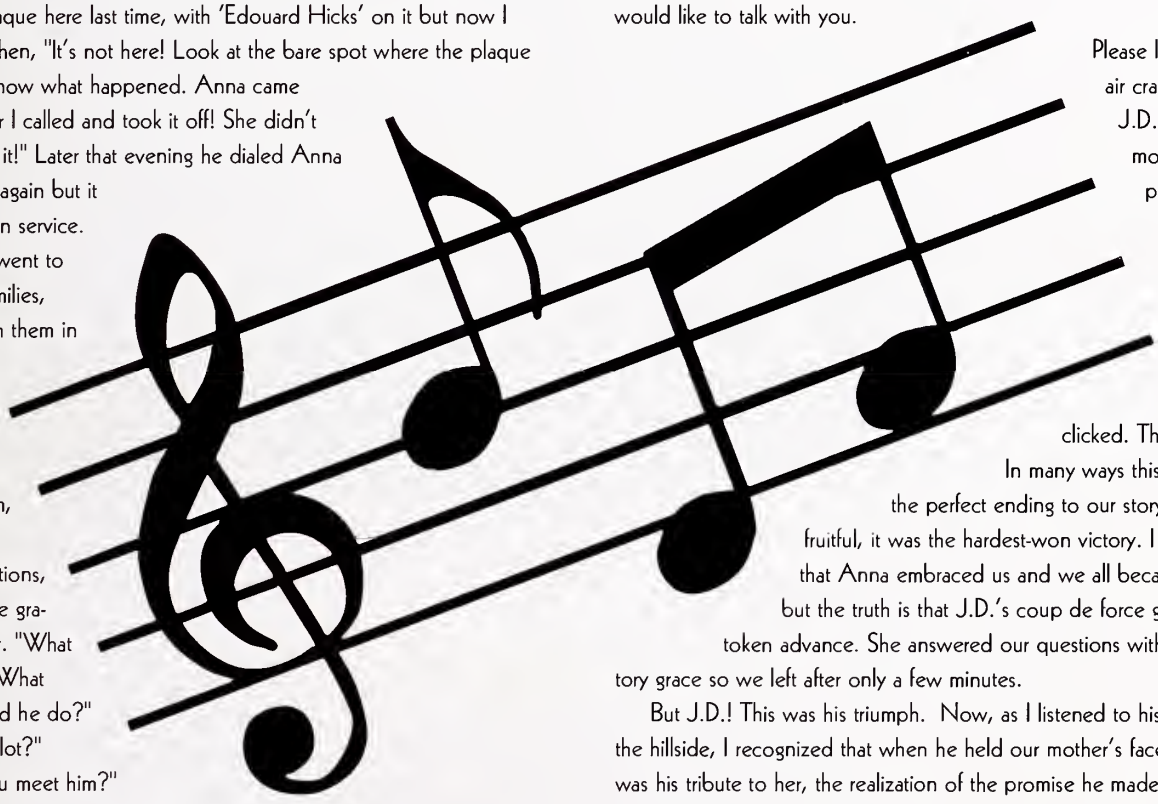
When we went to visit the two families, J.D. spoke with them in German, the most common language among us. Through him, we bombarded them with questions, which they were gracious to answer. "What was he like?" "What kind of work did he do?" "Did he read a lot?" "Where did you meet him?" "What was his favorite color?" "What were his hobbies?" Hospitable and polite, they answered all of our questions and more. "Was he a good man?" my mother finally ventured. When J.D. translated the question, Marc Vincent, eyes full of tears, put up his index finger like a salute and said in English, "Primo. He was primo."

Then Clement Haen, eyes bright with happiness, handed us a stack of photographs. As we rotated them, we came to one in which our grandfather was around fifty, the same age our mother was now. Stunned, J.D. stared at me, his eyes brimming with pregnant pools like mine. Edouard had our mother's face.

We left, armed with happiness. They had made our grandfather come alive for us. There was one remaining mission: to storm the bulwarks of the reluctant next-of-kin. Our grandfather's friends gently explained that they belonged to a strict Catholic sect that did not believe in divorce. Before we appeared, they hadn't known that my grandfather had been married before or had children. We had inadvertently embarrassed Anna, which was not something she would thank us for.

Undaunted, we were determined to befriend her. We drove to her apartment. As we walked into the commons, my heartbeat drumming my ears, my eyes scanned for door 40. J.D. whispered, "There it is!" He knocked. There was a shuffle of slippered feet, then silence. The three of us locked eyes. J.D. knocked again. When that aroused no response, he slipped a note under the door saying that we wished to talk with her. We could feel her just inches away, on the other side of the door, willing us to go away. We stood outside the stronghold of our grandfather's door for an uncertain half-hour. Every five minutes, J.D. knocked persistently, to no avail.

Suddenly something old and mysterious gripped him. Surprising even himself, he shouted, "ANNA! ANNA! Please let us in! We know you're in there! Hello! Hello! I am the grandson of your husband and I am with my family. We have come from America and would like to talk with you.



Please let us in!" The air crackled. Suddenly J.D. gripped my mother's face and put it up to the peephole. "Anna! Look at this face! Look at this FACE." The latch clicked. There she was.

In many ways this episode was the perfect ending to our story. Though not fruitful, it was the hardest-won victory. I wish I could say that Anna embraced us and we all became great friends but the truth is that J.D.'s coup de force gained us only a token advance. She answered our questions with only perfunctory grace so we left after only a few minutes.

But J.D.! This was his triumph. Now, as I listened to his grass harp on the hillside, I recognized that when he held our mother's face in his hands, it was his tribute to her, the realization of the promise he made to her when he was ten. His boisterous rally cry reminded me of Mr. Van Ecksell leading us to the inspiring end of the march, my favorite part. There is something intrinsically unifying about this march. Brass voices ring out, snare drums beat cadence, blood pumps with pride. But it is during the coda that, of their own volition, feet prance high and hearts—that may ordinarily be at odds—burst with brotherhood.

The Skimmin's

by Mary Chesson

Mama always knew
just when the fruit was ripe ready.
The clean jelly jars were lined up
like glass sentinels awaiting the pulp.
We stirred and stirred the roiling pink lava.
Quickly now — skim off
the spongy froth from the jelly below.

The filled jars were perfect;
next door neighbors admired
the crystal clear contents with no streaks,
just the unbroken color of the fruit.

But, Mama saved the skimmings in a bowl,
tucked away in the corner of the refrigerator.
It was the unsightly froth to be occasionally tasted —
the sweetest part that had risen to the top.
Just a tasting-party taste now and then;
too much at once would end in an upset stomach.
The trick was in knowing just the right amount to taste
to know the real flavor of the imperfect but delicious
skimmings of life.

Illustration by Greg Van Hoose

When I Lost My Smile

by Dolores V. Haro

Everybody has lost something in life: keys, money, jobs, etc. I twice lost something very important: My smile. The first time when I lost my smile I was eleven. That day my sister Mary and I were playing in the garden of our house. I had a kite I made by painting the cartoon section of the Sunday newspaper. Mary was playing with her doll, but when she saw my kite, she wanted it. I agreed to let her have it later, and she understood. Mary used to do jokes about everything, and that moment was not the exception. She took the broom and pretending she had a sword she aimed at me. "If you don't give me that kite, I'll use my sword against you and I'll defeat you, ugly dragon!" She could not avoid laughing because I did some gestures with my nose. Mary was running behind me, suddenly, when we were face-to-face, Mary stepped on a brick and slipped. The broom's handle hit my mouth and broke one of my teeth in two parts. I was scared. I touched my mouth and half of the tooth fell in my hand. Mary was crying. She told me that it was an accident. She was worried for me. I could not hear well; I was dizzy, like floating on the air. When Mom arrived, she thought that we were fighting. She didn't pay attention to the explanations of Mary. We were punished. After school, we had to stay in our bedroom: no TV and no games for two weeks, and Mom didn't talk to us. I didn't know the importance of having a broken tooth until the moment when the kids in my school started to make fun of me. Mom could not take me to the dentist because we had no money.

My mother ran a household of seven kids. She worked hard: cleaned houses during mornings and ironed clothes for other people in the evenings. In Mexico there is not a social program like Medicare, and the income was just enough for the most necessary things at home. I was eleven, and my tooth would not grow again. I tried to find some solution like covering my tooth with something. I remember that one time I used a piece of foil paper, or I used my tongue to disguise that my tooth was broken, but nothing worked. I was different; I thought it is stupid that my attitude had to change for something so little. I decided that the best thing was not to smile anymore, and I did it. I hid my smile in some place under myself.

Days, months, and years passed, and I was the most serious girl; no friends, no boyfriends, and no smiles. I was like a spectator, just watching life pass. When I was seventeen, I had my first job. I started to work evenings because in the morning I attended high school. I remember that my first paycheck was 1,500 pesos, equal to 130 dollars approximately, and it came twice at month. It was more than good, for me. It gave me the opportunity to go to the dentist. The treatment took almost one month. I was very excited. When I had my whole tooth again, I passed several hours looking at myself in the mirror, and I started to practice my smile. It was incredible how something very little can give you satisfaction. Now my life seemed different, and I felt like any other girl of my age.

Mom

by Dolores V. Haro

Let me be your eyes, and I'll read you the most beautiful stories.
Let me be your feet, and I'll carry you for silver moons, and new stars.
Let me hold you in my lap and sing your favorite song while you dream.
Let me dream that I could see your smile one more time.

But my misfortune seemed not to end, because I lost my smile again several years later. One day I saw my Mom run into a wall in the house. She said that she didn't see the wall. It worried me, and my siblings and I took Mom to the doctor. After several exams, the doctor said that blood pressure caused Mom to lose her sight. Later we would discover a big mistake. Every night Mom prayed for God to touch her eyes. She always said that God would give her the sight again. Her faith was unbreakable.

One Saturday night, Mom had a crisis; she babbled and blood ran from her mouth. We took her to the hospital. When I was close to Mom, I took her hands and kissed them. She had her eyes closed. Mom seemed like the Sleeping Beauty, waiting for her prince. Mom was in coma. The doctor told us that she had a tumor in the brain, and it provoked the loss of sight and the stroke. The nightmare was beginning. Mom had to be taken to another hospital for the surgery. I traveled with her in the ambulance from one state to another state. I could hardly believe it: she looked like a baby that I wanted hold in my lap. When we arrived at the hospital, the nurses told me that for surgery they had to take off Mom's hair. I didn't want to see it, but the nurses asked me to hold her head. She moved, and I worried that she was suffering. After the surgery, she was moved to intensive, and we could see her just four minutes at 12:00 PM and four minutes at 8:00 PM. We had turns; sometimes I could not see her everyday. We asked the doctor if she could hear us; he said that sometimes the patient in a coma recognizes voices. One of the times that I saw her, I was caressing her left hand, and I told her that I would pray and I hoped that she did it with me. When I finished praying I could see a tear on her cheek. My siblings and I were closer than at any other moment. God heard Mom's prayers, because I knew that even when she didn't open her eyes, she could see us with her heart.

On the twelfth day, Mom was moved to a room on the seventh floor of the hospital. That day I was reading a book, seated beside her, when suddenly I thought I saw a butterfly, and when I looked at my mother, she opened, for fraction of a second, her eyes. I had hoped to hear the voice of Mom again, and feel her sight. That night while I tried to sleep on the floor under her bed, her arm fell down, so I set it back on the bed, and learned then that she had fever. I called the nurse, and she gave Mom some medicines. On the thirteenth day Mom died. She went, and I was very sad. My smile left me again.

A song says that the persons whom we love and who died will be waiting for us in a cloud at the end of the rainbow, at the end of the day, in the last page of a book, or in a star, and even when we cannot see them we can feel their souls with the wind. I know that one day we will be together. God has given me the smile again and sent me three angels, my babies.

Great and Small

by Tammie B. Johnson

The roar of the ocean,
A walk on the beach...
Soothes the soul,
Lifts the spirit,
Captures the heart,
Frees the mind,
Lends peace...
For a moment in time.

The peace and serenity found in walking on the beach must be a little like walking in heaven. Even amid the cacophony of sea gulls, the blaring radios of sunbathers and the delighted squealing of romping children, the in-out rolling, rushing splash of the ocean lends a calming, soothing effect.

Illustration by Frankie Hines

Listen. Hear the roar as it builds to a crescendo before crashing to the earth, only to decrescendo, then build again. See it glide back into its depths before swelling to rise and fall over and over again.

I could walk on the beach for hours on end. The sound washes over me like the water washing onto the shore. The wet sand is gritty, yet smooth, as the cool water swirls around my bare feet. Damp, dewy sea mist sprinkles across my cheeks, while the breeze dances through my hair. The pungent, yet pleasant, aroma of fish, cocoa butter tanning lotion and the salty ocean make a symphony of smells.

When I look out across the ocean at the vastness of it all, at the sky kissing the ocean far off at the edge of the universe, I am overwhelmed. Whenever I get strung out from life and all its demands, I can lose myself in the roar of the ocean. Its power entrances me.

The longer I walk, the smaller I feel as the greatness descends upon me. Yet, at the same time, the sounds envelop me and wrap their arms around me like a parent embracing his child and my worries fall away. Once again, I begin to grow, for I know I am safe. My heart has spoken to the greatness. I have been heard and answered. I am at peace once more.

Photo by Evan Hager

Arizona

by Buffy Teal

Arizona

A dream of a blue night sky

A warm and gentle wind

Driving just to drive

Nowhere is my destination.

I wish time could just stand still

Shadows dancing in a star lit sky

With just the full moon to guide my way

I'm lost somewhere between dream and reality

A realm traveled yet unknown to me

And for once I smile to spite myself

The peace I feel when I am here.

I look around and this land goes on forever in all directions

Wishing the dream could last that long

Dreading the journey back to where I don't belong.

Fields of Labor

A Photo Essay by Ben McDowell

Migrant workers load the trucks bins with cucumbers one basket at a time, for which they get a ticket worth thirty cents. The best pickers load two hundred to two hundred fifty baskets per day.

Workers get a rest on the back of a cucumber truck as they move from field to field.

Photography student Ben McDowell photographed migrant workers in eastern North Carolina in the Fall of 2003. Below are a few of those photos.

A worker sitting in a folding chair checks his haircut with a shard of broken glass. The workers line up periodically for these impromptu haircuts.

The workers' few belongings are boxed up and carried away as they leave for the season. Most go to Florida from North Carolina, but others go to family and pre-arranged employment.

When Worlds Collide

by Tina Dunn

They say she is a natural. She is eighteen, blonde with blue eyes. She is of average height, plump, but very curvaceous. She is confident and mature. She feels beautiful and desirable. She mesmerizes men with every move of her body. She is an exotic dancer. Her clients at the club find her erotic and tantalizing -- like a tasty dish. She does not care about the money that men shove into her t-bar. Not that she does not enjoy the hundreds of dollars that she brings home for a few hours of work, but that is not why she does it. She loves her work because, to her, it is an art. It is her escape from reality.

At her high school, she is seen differently. She is popular. She belongs to many clubs and is a library aide. She is a cute girl who is the epitome of innocence. She is an honor roll student, always the teacher's pet. She is confident in her studies, but not in herself. She is so kind and always thinking of others. She has no time or need of boyfriends. She is content to stay at home while her friends go out to parties and on dates. She enjoys her school because it is where she excels.

In her work at a fast food restaurant, she is a hard worker and very loyal. She is quickly promoted to a management position. She no longer has to wipe tables or clean the restrooms. She is an excellent conflict resolutionist and keeps everything flowing smoothly. She knows who needs to be where and at what time. She even helps her boss fill out his paperwork and assists in scheduling. Her peers look up to her and do not mind doing whatever she asks. She is always helpful. She is a highly valued employee and that makes her very proud.

She wants to be beautiful, sexy, sweet, and smart, but this concept is unacceptable. She walks from one world to the next, keeping her feelings bottled up so tightly inside that the explosion of emotion is inevitable. She is exhausted; her schedule is too demanding. She cannot keep this up forever. It is only a matter of time before she crosses the line. She begins dressing too provocatively for school. She falls asleep in class. Her grades begin to drop. Her teachers are disappointed in her and she is taunted by classmates.

At her fast food job, her boss has recently learned of her other job. He flirts with her and requests table dances, leaving her in tears. She is expected to do more menial work, including cleaning the toilets. Her coworkers do not try to stifle their giggles. She is tense now as she dances. She is not flirty and fun.
Her boss is angry and she gets less time on stage. Everyone wants her to be who they want her to be. She just wants to be herself, but she does not know who that is. All is in shambles when her worlds collide.

Photo by Elizabeth Aviles

bygones

by denise c. fisher

confusion
i send
i cry
please understand
my heart
i cannot rescind
but would give

treasured truth
keenly labored
on the borders of
death
joyously savored
of life's tender breadth

eye to eye
etched and laced
by the same
ceaseless sand
we
hand to hand
interfaced
by one hope to
withstand

priceless the pith
scorn shaves for a
song
afraid to be taken
or admit
i am wrong

"Give Me Your Poor" by Ashley Fetner

Matthew

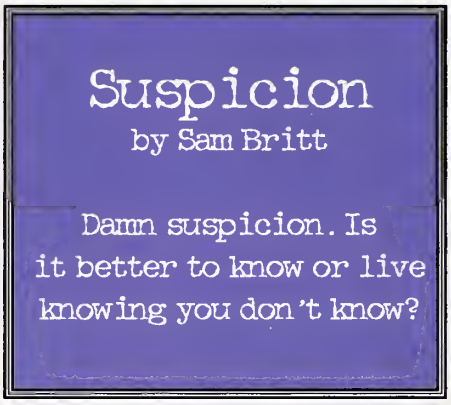
by Sayword Eller

The room was dark with strobe lights flashing in every corner. The Cure's "Painted on My Heart" was playing in the background and the air was quickly beginning to fill with smoke from the many cigarettes that were lit. She made her way through the crowd slowly, looking at every face she passed. Not that it helped. Most everyone was wearing a mask for this costume party. She made it to the table that held the refreshments and dipped the ladle into the punchbowl scooping out the last of the funky concoction. She scanned the room again. Her husband had left her standing in the middle of the dance floor over an hour ago and since then she had wanted nothing more than to go home, or meet up with a certain someone she had been dreaming about for months.

Matthew, that strange and alluring creature of a man her husband had brought home to meet her almost a year before. She had been attracted to him from the second she laid eyes on him. It was like an animal attraction, one that she hadn't dared act on. It hadn't been until a few months after they had met that she had gotten the first inkling he felt the same way. They had been alone, waiting for her husband to arrive home that it first happened. She had gone into the kitchen to get him a drink and when she turned around to start back into the den he had been there. They had collided and her drink had spilled all down his shirtfront. "I'm sorry," she had said.

He hadn't said a word, only lifted his hand, trailing his finger along her collarbone. Her breath had caught as her head inched closer and closer to his. Their breathing slowed to an anticipatory pace as they leaned into each other. His hand on her bare shoulder sent thrilling shocks through her body and made the warm pooling in her belly light into a raging inferno. Their lips were almost touching when she had heard the front door open and her husband begin to call her name. That had been the start to something forbidden, yet not entirely. They had yet to kiss, but more than once Matthew's hand had lingered on hers when she had handed him something or vice versa. She had spent so many nights dreaming of what it would be like to kiss him, to be in his bed, that one more night of dreaming may be enough to drive her crazy. Yet they had held back, not wanting to destroy her marriage and the friendship he had with her husband.

She sipped her drink slowly, not wanting whatever liquor had been added to take her over too quickly, and turned to walk back into the crowd. From the corner of her eye she caught sight of a man dressed as Robin Hood. She stopped and turned to look at him.



Immediately she knew that it was Matthew. Ignoring the butterflies fluttering madly in her belly, she walked over to where he was leaning with one foot against the wall, sipping on a glass of the same mystery juice she had in hand. She smiled at him, but he didn't smile back.

"Hey there," she said, talking over the music that boomed around them.

He looked at her with his penetrating green eyes, pushed away from the wall, and slid his arm around her waist. The music seemed to grow louder, drowning out the noise of the laughter from partygoers around them. His green gaze still on her, he leaned forward and pressed his lips to hers.

A surge of energy coursed through her body and she felt herself wrapping her arms around his neck, returning that forbidden kiss. The thoughts that she would let through were thoughts that she didn't care to think about at that time. What if they were caught? She felt like the floor beneath her was spinning, twirling them around and around. Just when she thought they might be swirled into oblivion he pulled away.

He leaned back against the wall, panting heavily. She touched her fingers to her throbbing lips, smiled, then turned and walked away. This was all they could ever have. She knew that from the way he had looked at her. He wasn't willing to risk his friendship and she wasn't willing to risk her marriage. She would relive that kiss over and over for a long time, this she knew. She raised her hand to take a sip of her drink, but realized she had dropped it when the passion had taken over. She turned to go back to the punch bowl, maybe they had refilled it, but was stopped when a hand landed heavily on her shoulder. She turned to see her husband, smiling drunkenly at her.

"Hey, beautiful," he slurred.

"Hey yourself," she said, laughing at the comical look on his face. "Where have you been?"

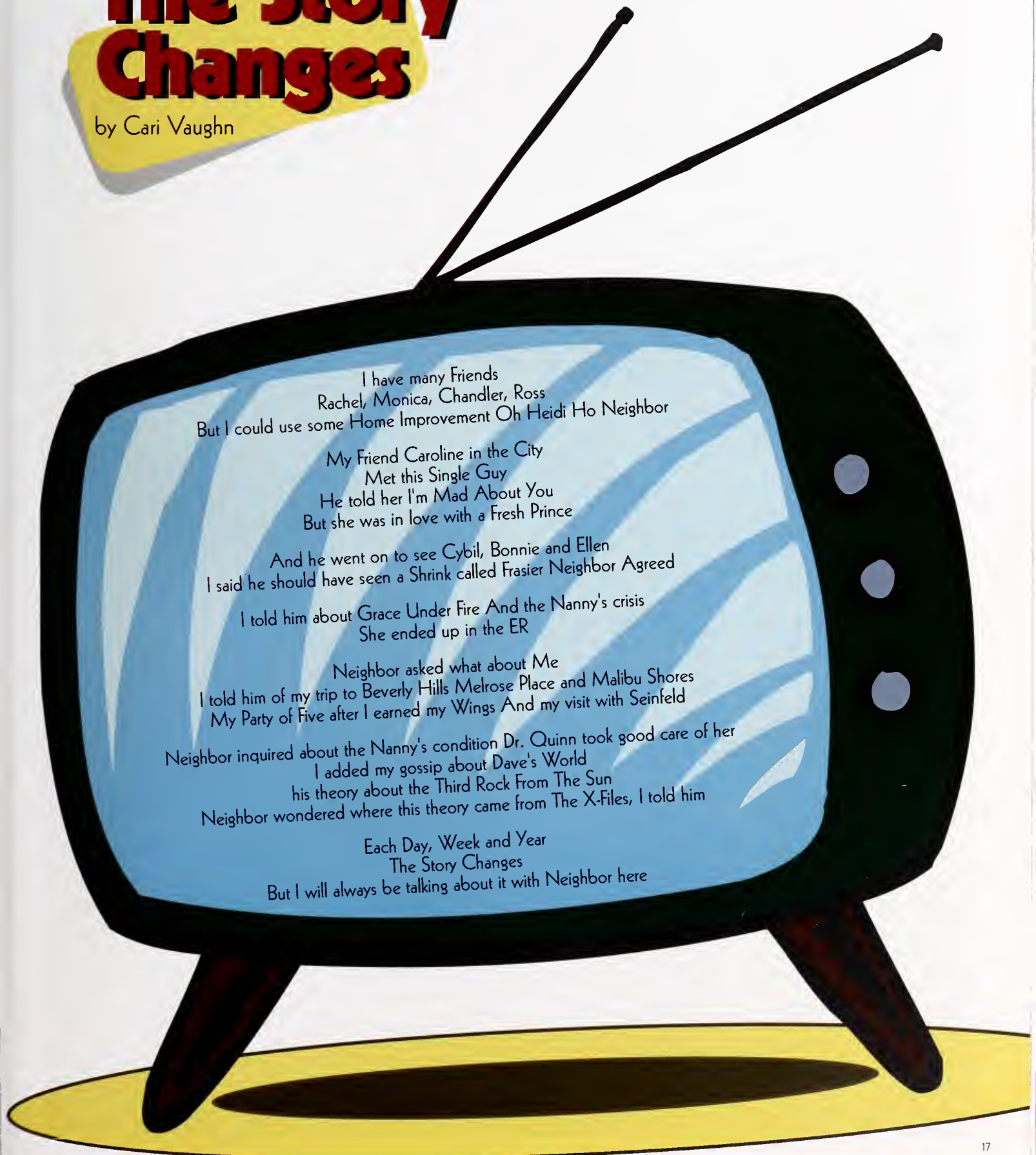
"You know," he said, throwing his hand haphazardly in the air.

She laughed again. "Okay, let's get going. You need to be put down." She slid her arm around his waist to steady him and began walking toward the door.

Before stepping outside she glanced back at Matthew. He was still there and still staring directly at her. She smiled softly at him, and then pushed the door open. With her husband at her side she walked out into the chilly October air.

The Story Changes

by Cari Vaughn



I have many Friends
Rachel, Monica, Chandler, Ross
But I could use some Home Improvement Oh Heidi Ho Neighbor

My Friend Caroline in the City
Met this Single Guy
He told her I'm Mad About You
But she was in love with a Fresh Prince

And he went on to see Cybil, Bonnie and Ellen
I said he should have seen a Shrink called Frasier Neighbor Agreed

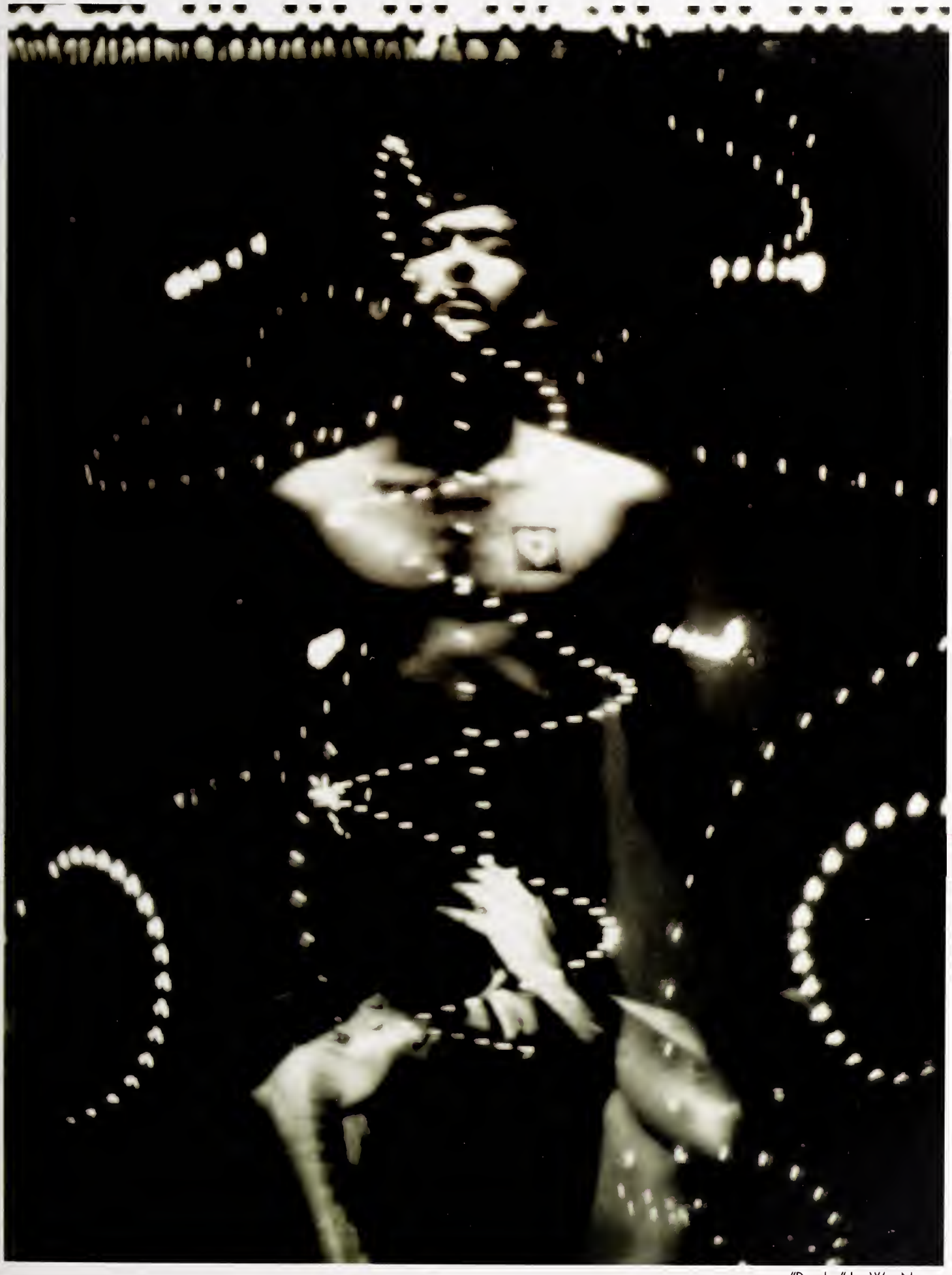
I told him about Grace Under Fire And the Nanny's crisis
She ended up in the ER

Neighbor asked what about Me
I told him of my trip to Beverly Hills Melrose Place and Malibu Shores
My Party of Five after I earned my Wings And my visit with Seinfeld

Neighbor inquired about the Nanny's condition Dr. Quinn took good care of her
I added my gossip about Dave's World
his theory about the Third Rock From The Sun
Neighbor wondered where this theory came from The X-Files, I told him

Each Day, Week and Year
The Story Changes
But I will always be talking about it with Neighbor here

"Plasticity" by Joey Seawell



"Paradox" by Wes Naman

By the Tale

by Michelle Hines

"Well, um, hello, sir," said the bone-thin, graying man who stood at the door. "We weren't expecting you quite so soon."

The man wore a red fez and a red smoking jacket, which seemed to fit him and the house perfectly. He held a curved wooden pipe in one hand. Jed suppressed his urge to laugh. What had he stumbled into? Some kind of wacky time warp?

"I'm Mac," the fezzed man said, not bothering to offer his hand as he opened the door further. "And this is my brother, Jack."

Now Jed could see a second man, shorter and much plumper, in the doorway of the slightly dilapidated Victorian house. He, too, wore a fez and a smoking jacket although his were dark green.

"We're fraternal twins," the men said in unison, as if speaking in one voice.

"Two peas of a pod," said Mac, nodding at Jack.

"Or, to the contrary, a pod with two peas," said Jack, with a wink at Mac.

"Come in," they both said, waving Jed toward an overstuffed leather sofa. They seated themselves in two velveted Victorian chairs, facing Jed.

"I'm Geoffrey Windham. I was interested in the ad you placed," Jed reminded them after a long silence. "In the *Weekly News*. You wanted a personal assistant." He hadn't counted on two of them. The ad just said "elderly gentleman."

"Oh yes," the brothers exclaimed, looking at each other excitedly. "The ad!"

"Yes," Jed continued, a little on edge. "It said I wouldn't have to have any specific experience, just a love of animals and attention to detail." Oh, he'd pay attention to detail — every detail of their considerable bank accounts. He'd stay just long enough to become trusted and indispensable. Then he'd embezzle what he could and run. He'd assumed a fake name and altered his appearance. The authorities would never be able to trace him.

Mac put on a tiny pair of wire-rimmed glasses as he leaned forward to survey Jed.

"Are you squeamish, sir?" he asked. "Do you have a fear of pets?"

"Or, to the contrary, do pets have a fear of you?" added Jack.

"We can't employ anyone squeamish," Mac explained. "Or anyone who makes our menagerie squeamish."

Jed shook his head. What loonies!

"Then it's settled," said Mac.

"It's settled," added Jack, rising from his seat, and waving Jed ahead with a doughy gray arm. "We'll show you to your room."

The same flooring extended throughout the house: A red and white checkered pattern. Sort of like a chess board, he thought as his leather shoes slapped against the polished wood beneath his feet.

"Do you like the floors?" Mac asked as they made their way down a narrow hallway. "We had them custom made, you know. Jack and I are huge fans of Lewis Carroll — his real name was Charles Dodgson, of course, and he was an absolute mathematical and philosophical genius. Mother used to read us his stories each night when we were children. The floors reflect the chess game Alice wanders into in *Through the Looking Glass*."

"To the contrary," uttered Jack, "the chess game is reflected in the floors. And, not to belabor the point, but did Alice find the chess game or did the chess game find Alice? It's all a matter of perspective."

Mac sneered at his brother's comment, giving a yellow-toothed false grin and continuing in his role of tour director. The house held an eclectic hodge-podge of items, ranging from a suit of armor to a huge gold Buddha. Ugh, thought Jed, even a swindler like me has a better sense of décor.

"So, uh, what sorts of animals do you fellas keep?" He imagined that he caught a subtle exchange between the brothers and sensed that they were choosing their words carefully on this subject.

"There are rabbits, Mr. Windham, white ones," Mac began. "Turtles. Small pigs. A Caterpillar farm. And a fawn. And a cat, of course. We'd so like to secure a walrus — Carroll's 'The Walrus and the Carpenter,' you know — but we've had such problems with PETA."

"Or, rather, PETA has had problems with us," Jack corrected.

Loonies for sure, Jed told himself. But these loonies had money.

The hallway seemed to go on forever, as if a person could never reach the end no matter how far he walked. But they finally reached the door at the end of the corridor. A simple white sign hung on the door: "Guests Enter Here." Two smaller rooms directly across the hall were labeled "Dee" and "Dum."

"And here it is," said Mac proudly, opening the door wide with his lentil-like arm. If the room was large, the furniture was larger. It was scaled to accommodate a giant.

"Or, rather, here we are," said Jack. "It's getting late, so we'll leave you to rest

for the evening."

"I'll bring up some refreshments for you later. And, oh, do you play Mischmasch?" Mac wanted to know. When he saw Jed's puzzled expression, he added, "It's a word game invented by Carroll. Quite an invigorating challenge."

"Contrariwise," added Jack, "it's the invigoration that's the challenge."

Jed shook his head, feeding them a line about being too groggy to think clearly. The loonies told him they'd leave him for the night. They'd be back first thing in the morning, they said. He just had to meet Cheshire, their prized cat. About an hour after they left him, he heard a soft tap at the door. He opened it to find only a tall glass filled with a greenish liquid resting on the floor. "Drink Me," directed a small card taped to the glass. He did, telling himself he had nothing to lose. They were just two harmless old crazies. He'd be free of them soon enough. And they'd be free of a small fortune.

The slightly bitter drink seemed to pull him into the black silence of hard sleep. His dreams were fitful although he couldn't seem to wake himself. All around him he heard wild noises he couldn't identify. He saw strange apparitions drawing nearer, but he was helpless to run.

When he finally awoke, just before dawn, he was exhausted and confused. It took him a few minutes to get his bearings and recollect where he was. As he sat up in the gigantic four-poster bed, it seemed to swallow him whole. The room seemed to spin like a top out of control. He felt an odd weight on his chest, not unbearable but not natural either. He groped for a small sign that hung around his neck. His eyes were blurry as he struggled to make out the words. As he reached for his glasses on the bedside table, he heard a gentle tapping at the door.

"Come in," he managed, slurring his words.

In the doorway he could just make out Mac's wispy frame. And Jack's lumpy silhouette. But there was something else with them. Something large and orange with hot, heavy breath. The three strange figures came closer as he put on the glasses and craned his neck to look down at the sign: "Eat Me."

"We told you you'd have to meet Cheshire," Mac said.

"Or, contrariwise, that Cheshire would have to meet you," Jack said.

The hungry tiger lumbered closer. Jed tried to move, but, just like in his dream, his terror left him frozen. He tried to rouse himself from his nightmare but found himself unable to run.

Photo by Terry L. James

Things Untold

by Kathryn Reynolds

Wearing my black shawl I crouch at the pane
I reach out to touch the cold, wet window
Thoughts flash, my grandmother, crops, boll weevils.
A murder of crows peck in barren soil –
Winds have begun to blow the old scarecrow.
He dances a waltz alone in the field –
Her rocking chair creeks on the front porch,
as tree branches whisper a lullaby
somehow out of tune; no rhythm; no rhyme –
Lingering ghost: Grandma's stories of old.

Unables

by Jasmine Diggs

On midnights,
On Saturdays,
And out of the blues,
a beautiful black,
a scary want,
and a frightening need,
the slither of his voice
inside my insecurities
then through my sins
around my morals.
Around them, and through them.
There are memories still existing
Moving with that same zest
As the day they created—
the moment they denied
a death to be mourned
a dream to be replayed
through the midnights
and on Saturdays
sometimes even out of the blue
I am
Brought back to those places
In the cold
fooled...by those same cotton sheets
and queen quilts,
engaged in the movement
of pleasant eyes
searching a scenery
For situations
to place in my hands.
Suceeding every time.
Now. Through fertilized soils and growing crops,
I am one Saturday, out of the blue, pacing the
Earth for that recollection of
those midnights.

The Mirror

by Abigail Curtis

I am a mirror image
A reflection of you
I let you see only what you want
Only what pleases you

I am your reflection
Whoever you are
I mimic your actions
I am as you are

To the pace of your walk
I adjust my stride
To the tone of your voice
I modify mine

You see in the mirror
A reflection of you
Your fancies become me
And I become you

You fold your arms
And your reflection does too
Whatever your actions
I do as you do

I am a mirror image
I am not myself
What you see is who you think I am
And who you want me to be

I reflect who you are
My reflection is gone
To gain your approval
I let go of myself

I am a mirror image
A toy on a shelf
I am a mirror image
I have lost myself

I Have Time For You

by Philip Shore

Is oil precious, are clear stones the meaning of life?
Or is it gold or paper or plastic?
Or is it time
Unseeable, Unstoppable
Unusable, Unreasonable
Time that is the meaning
That is the precious?

When the jokes come through the first go-round
When repeats haven't yet begun
When love is happening uncharted,
It's easy,
In this shadow epoch
A moment in the aeon of the second of affection,
To accept and coo,
To forgive an anvil slight
As if it were a feather.

The shadow moment
Is when we do not know
Fault or crime or doubt,
When we still think
We don't have to know:
It's easy to say, to sing, to moan with pleasure,
I have time for you,
Oh best beloved, oh darling of the spice garden
Oh winged creature with doe eyes,
Everything you do is treasure

But when you know the punch line
When habit gives answer
When love is an abstract conception,
Not in current use,
One known to have existed
In perfect form
In the remembered past,

Do I then have time for you?
Do you then have time for me?

Uncle Hiram's Butterfly

by Loretta Lutman

During trips to my garden over the past few years, Uncle Hiram had begun to share my love, fascination and interest in butterflies. When my husband and I would visit him, he would inquire about our magical winged friends.

Although Uncle Hiram was eventually hospitalized with a terminal illness, he continued to ask what was happening in the butterfly garden. During one visit, I told him about a very exciting event that had occurred in the garden since our last visit. On September 20th, for two hours, our house had been on the direct migration route for the Monarch butterflies. Annually, in mid to late September, the Monarchs migrate from as far away as Canada, flying down to overwinter in the mountains of Mexico, a distance of over 2000 miles.

On this particular afternoon, Monarchs began to appear, dropping over the house and sailing into the garden, stopping to nectar before resuming their long journey. The entire garden was aflutter with dancing Monarchs. They came, too quickly, and too numerous to count. Our estimate was about 300 butterflies over the two-hour period. They stopped coming almost as quickly as they had begun.

As afternoon faded into evening, an occasional Monarch would glide down into the garden. Between 7 and 8 pm, about 30 or so stragglers came, circling around the tree tops in the golden light of the late evening sun. They settled in to roost for the evening, choosing an eastern exposure so they would benefit from the warmth of the early morning sun.

What fun it was to go out early the next morning and look up to the tree tops, where suddenly, a bright patch of orange would appear like a beacon. Ever so slowly, rhythmically, their wings opened and closed. With grace, one by one, they gently sailed away for another day's journey.

Uncle Hiram was able to enjoy the story of the Monarchs, even as his health declined. On the afternoon of October 24th, we were notified that he had taken a sudden turn for the worse. We arrived for our last visit about 4 pm, and had a few minutes alone with him. Although he was comatose, I rested my hand on his shoulder, put my cheek next to his, and whispered in his ear. "Why don't you hop on the wings of the next Monarch and come into my garden?" After our brief visit, we left for home. At 7:30 that evening, we received a call that he had passed away.

While walking through the garden the next day, I mourned a special uncle, who 38 years ago accepted me immediately and unconditionally into the family when I married his nephew. As I looked up, there before me on a Mexican sunflower, sat a single Monarch butterfly! In some cultures, they celebrate the Festival of the Dead, where it is believed that butterflies represent the souls of the deceased coming back to visit relatives. Just perhaps.....was it Uncle Hiram, coming to bid farewell on his way to a better place?

Forest Dwelling

by Jim Pickeral

Living in the woods
The leaves are not a problem
A simple abode

Editors

Andrea Cavallier (front right) is a student in RCC's Associate Arts program. She plans to transfer to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in the fall and to major in both Communications and Journalism.

Sayword Eller (front left) currently attends RCC and plans to transfer to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in Fall 2005. She plans to major in English and Journalism.

Denise Fisher (front center) is a student in RCC's college transfer program. She also served on the staff of Uwharrie Dreams Vol. II.

Jared Johnson (back right) currently attends RCC. He plans to major in Philosophy and English and intends to teach.

Kathryn Reynolds (back center) is a student in RCC's Photographic Technology department. She previously majored in English and Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She was the third place winner in the short story division of RCC's 2004 writing contest.

Greg Van Hoose (back left) currently works as Randolph Community College's Graphic/Web Designer. He has worked as an editor of Uwharrie Dreams since the magazine's inception in 2001.

Shannon Wilkerson (not pictured) currently attends RCC in the Associate Arts transfer program. She plans to major in Special Education.

Contributors

Elizabeth Aviles, Terry L. James, John Rolland, and **Joey Seawell** are currently enrolled in RCC's Photography program.

Evan Hager, Megan Shuford, and **Will White** are former RCC photography students.

Jonathan D. Britt is a first-time contributor to Uwharrie Dreams.

Sam Britt received her Master of Arts degree in English from UNCG. She has taught English at RCC since 2002 and also teaches English at Pfeiffer University. She lives in Asheboro with her husband and her feline children. In her spare time, she enjoys writing haiku, scuba diving, especially deep sea wreck diving, and collecting vintage clothing and jewelry.

Mary Chesson formerly taught English at RCC and served as General Education department chair. She is currently Dean of Instruction at Montgomery Community College in Troy, N.C.

Abigail Curtis is now enrolled in RCC's transfer program. She plans to transfer to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington to study marine biology.

Jasmine Diggs is 25. She has a daughter and lives in Thomasville. She is currently studying engineering at Guilford Technical Community College. She also writes poetry and sells artwork and wants to succeed as the artist she was created to be.

Tina Dunn is a first-year student at Randolph Community College. She is working on her Associate's Degree.

Ashley Fetner is a photography instructor at RCC. His photograph, "Give Me Your Poor", won two awards, including an honor from the PPNC Loan Collection. Ashley graduated from RCC's Photography Program in 1979 and upon graduation served a two-year apprenticeship with former theatrical and former White House photographer B. Artin Haig in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. His awards include First Place, Court of Honor, Distinguished, The Kodak Gallery Award and The Fuji Masterpiece Award for Excellence in Portraiture of Women, Children, Family and Bridal Portraits.

Dolores V. Haro is originally from Mexico and came to Asheboro four years ago. Her poem, "Mom", deals with the last days of her mother's life. Her mother lost her sight before she died and remained in a coma for thirteen days.

Frankie Hines is a retired longtime pre-school teacher living in Wilmington, N.C. She enjoys drawing and painting in her free time.

Michelle Hines is an English instructor at RCC and served as advisor for Uwharrie Dreams Vol. III.

Tammie B. Johnson is a former student of RCC, she is a social worker at Youth Unlimited in High Point. Most importantly she is the mother of Jared, Kaysi, and Lynsi, each a current or former student of RCC.

Karen Luther was an Associate in Arts student at RCC 2000 -2002. She went on to pursue an art major at UNC-G.

Loretta Lutman dedicates her time and expertise at the NC Zoological Park butterfly garden and Hardee's Touch and Learn Center. She is currently writing a children's book on the life cycle of the butterfly. If anybody has questions about butterflies, ask Loretta Lutman; she's the 'butterfly lady.'

Wes Naman is a recent graduate of RCC's Photography program.

Jim Pickeral is a writer, philosopher and organic grower who finds inspiration in the Uwharrie forests. He is past Editor in Chief of Uwharrie Dreams Volume II and one of the founding editors of the magazine.

Will Ritter is a graduate of RCC's Advertising and Graphic Design program and is currently enrolled in RCC's college transfer program.

Phil Shore is director of the Randolph County Arts Guild. He is short story judge of the RCC Writer's Contest.

Renee Britt Sink, a North Carolina native, has spent the best part of her life in Randolph County. She attended Randolph Community College for two years before transferring to UNCG where she graduated before the turn of the century with a bachelor's degree in English. She is married, has ten nieces and nephews, two peach trees, and three Muscatine vines. She is a member of Myths and Makers and has won multiple awards in RCC's student writing contest.

Buffy Teal is a single mom to a 3-year-old daughter. She is working toward a degree in information systems. She enjoys computers, spending time with her baby, movies, music, and books.

Jason Thomas currently attends RCC and plans to major in Business Psychology. His hobbies include watching TV, thinking about things, playing with his pets, being on the computer, and being with his girlfriend. "Life is like a rose," he says. "One can not get past the thorns and to the flower alone."

Cari Vaughn holds a B.A. in English from Ohio State University at Mansfield and an M.A. in English from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She has published poems in various journals. She also published two books -- Journey Without A Map: A Collection of Poetry and Radiant Darkness: A Collection of Short Stories. Currently teaching at Marion Technical College in Marion, Ohio, she taught English 111 and English 232 at RCC in the fall of 2003.

Front & Back Cover Photos by Kathryn Reynolds